

Mr. President, in addition to the notable accomplishment of submitting a balanced unified budget, the President also cautioned Congress not to spend the unified budget surplus that is projected, but instead to use those funds to protect Social Security. I think this is one of the better statements we have had in a long time with regard to not only fiscal responsibility, but also our responsibility to future generations that hope to obtain the benefits of the Social Security for which they have already been paying.

The President's admonition in this regard may have been just as important as his achievement in proposing a balanced unified budget. The President is absolutely right in urging that any unified budget surpluses not be spent. But while I strongly agree with his sentiment, I approach this issue from a little different perspective. Again, there are many of us who do not view the unified budget as the appropriate measure of our Nation's budget. In particular, I want to acknowledge two of my colleagues on the Budget Committee, the Senator from South Carolina, Mr. HOLLINGS and the Senator from North Dakota, Mr. CONRAD, for their consistent warnings on this issue of how we calculate and determine and speak about what is really a balanced budget.

Mr. President, the unified budget is not the budget which should guide our policy decisions. The projected surpluses in the unified budget are not real. In fact, far from surpluses, what we really have are continuing on-budget deficits masked, in part, by Social Security revenues. Now, this distinction is absolutely critical. The very word "surplus" connotes that there is some extra amount of money or bonus around. One definition of the word surplus is, "something more than, or in excess of, what is needed or required."

Mr. President, the projected unified budget is not more than or in excess of what is needed or required. Those funds are required. Those funds are spoken for. In this regard, I take just slight exception to the President's characterization that we should use the surplus to protect Social Security. Some could infer from his comments that the President has chosen, from various alternatives, the best or most prudent option for using surplus funds. I am afraid people will look at it that way and, certainly, from the perspective of the unified budget, it is arguably the best and most prudent option, if we really had surpluses. But, Mr. President, those of us who see the unified budget as merely an accounting convenience do not believe this is an alternative or an option. To repeat, Mr. President, those revenues are already spoken for. They were raised by Social Security for future use.

Mr. President, we have various trust funds in our budget, but Social Security is unlike most other trust funds, and it is unlike the others in this respect: It is by law "off budget."

It was taken off budget for this very reason; namely, the decision by Congress to forward fund Social Security by raising additional revenues in the near term to ensure the long-term solvency of the program.

Mr. President, I urge all of my colleagues to choose their use of the word "surplus" very carefully. The problem with the use of the word, or the overuse of the word, is that it encourages a way of thinking which may jeopardize not only the work that we have accomplished over the past 5 years but also the additional work that must be done to put our Nation on a firm financial footing.

The use of this term improperly encourages the kind of "business as usual" policies that promise immediate gratification while putting off tough budget-cutting decisions until later.

Mr. President, it is kind of like buying an expensive Valentine's Day gift for your sweetheart and then charging it to her credit card.

That is not the way to do business. That is hardly an honest approach to budgeting either.

Mr. President, the challenge before us now is to move quickly toward eliminating the on-budget deficit, balancing the budget without using Social Security trust funds, and in so doing to begin the very important process of bringing down and paying down our national debt.

Mr. President, we have to play it straight with the American people. We need to give them an honest balanced budget.

I very much hope this body will act to put us on that path this year, and I very much look forward to working with other members of the Budget Committee to ensure that we really do reach an honest balanced budget.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Ms. SNOWE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine is recognized.

Ms. SNOWE. Thank you, Mr. President.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT AGREEMENT—NOMINATION OF MARGARET MORROW

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, as in executive session, I ask unanimous consent that at 1 p.m. today the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the nomination of Margaret Morrow and a vote occur at 6 p.m. this evening with the time equally divided between Senators HATCH and ASHCROFT or their designees.

This request has been cleared by the minority.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed as if in morning business, and I ask for up to 30

minutes to be equally divided between myself and the Senator from Maine, Senator COLLINS.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. SNOWE. Thank you, Mr. President.

THE ICE STORM OF 1998

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I am pleased to join my colleague, Senator COLLINS, to discuss the unprecedented and historic storm in the State of Maine several weeks ago.

Mr. President, every once in a while—maybe only once every 100 years or more—an event happens that truly tests the strength of a people and the depth of their spirit. It is an event that strips away comforts and security and pretense and reveals for all to see the true nature of those whose lives it has in its grip. In my home State—the State of Maine—that event began on January 5 and is now known as the Great Ice Storm of 1998.

As shown here in this photograph, you can see the ice that covers the streets with the trees over the car. It wasn't just one area of the State. This really replicated almost the entire State in terms of the devastation of this storm.

As you would imagine, we are no strangers to a little winter weather. But this storm was like nothing anyone had ever seen before. By the time five days of sleet and freezing rain had worked their misery on the state, Maine was under a sheet of ice more than two inches thick, and Mainers suddenly found themselves without power, without heat, and facing a life more closely resembling one from 1898 than 1998.

The State was devastated by this unprecedented storm and many areas were described as resembling a "war zone." At its peak, the storm knocked out electrical power to an estimated 80 percent of Maine's households—and a week later, about 137,000 people were still without power. Schools and local governments ground to a halt. Over the weekend as the storm finally abated, over 3,000 people sought refuge in 197 shelters and two days later there were still over 2,000 Mainers staying in 111 shelters across the State. And in the end, all of Maine's 16 counties were declared federal disaster areas.

As you can see here, another sign that shows the kind of pleas that were made by residents all across this State, saying, "Power, please. Our transformer was taken away on Thursday." People lost their power for up to 2 and 3 weeks.

The Chairman of the historical committee of the American Meteorological Association, who also happens to be an associate professor of science, technology and society at Colby College in Waterville, MA, summed it up best: "So far this century there has been nothing like it . . . It will probably make the meteorological textbooks—as one of the biggest storms ever."

I traveled Maine extensively in the wake of the ice storm, and I was overwhelmed by the extent of the destruction, as we see here another photo of all the downed poles. That is exactly what happened all across the State. You can see the condition of the road. But it was a total destruction of the forests, the pole lines, as well as the telephone poles across the State. Three-quarters of the State, as I said, was affected by it.

Trees and branches felled, power lines snaked across ice-encrusted streets and major utility structures crumpled as if made of tin-foil. In fact about 50 such structures, an eight-mile stretch carrying the major electrical line into Washington County—the easternmost county in Maine and the United States—were destroyed.

The owner of that line, Bangor Hydro, needed 170 utility poles and 144,000 feet of 115,000 volt transmission line just to repair the eight miles of downed lines that left 10,000 Washington and Hancock County residents without power. Central Maine Power, the other major power company in the state, estimated that 2 to 3 million feet of power lines fell—2,000 utility poles had to be replaced as well as 5,250 transformers.

Between 1,200 and 2,000 National Guard soldiers were called to active duty, and 200 Army and Air National Guard personnel helped clear the roads. Central Maine Power had crews of more than 2,500 line and tree-trimming workers on the job. And Maine hosted line crews from Maryland, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Florida, Pennsylvania; New Jersey; Connecticut; Washington, D.C.; New Hampshire; and New Brunswick, Canada.

Broken trees and broken power lines littered the Maine landscape as far as the eye could see. But I discovered one thing in my travels that was never broken—one thing that may have been stronger after the storm than before—and that is the spirit of Maine's people. That is why I am speaking here today, Mr. President. Mainers faced the tremendous challenges this storm presented with resolve and a caring spirit which is truly remarkable and which makes me very proud to call Maine home.

Everywhere I went I heard stories of neighbors helping neighbors: people inviting strangers into their homes so that they might be warm, lending a hand with fallen trees so that they might be cleared and sharing advice so that no one would feel alone. Rising from the devastation left in the storm's wake was a tide of generosity and giving emblematic of Maine people, and it was deeply heartening to know that such compassion is alive and well in America.

Paul Field Sr. and his son, both of Bridgton, worked tirelessly and virtually without sleep for 10 days cutting branches, clearing roads, fighting fires, draining pipes, helping neighbors and moving generators to where they were most critically needed.

And Paul was not alone. In the Town of Albion, farmer Peter Door trucked a portable generator from farm to farm and slept in his truck while dairy farmers milked their cows. In Fairfield, Town Manager Terry York was moved to tears when talking to the Bangor Daily News about the volunteers who helped residents through the crisis.

Out of state crews found Mainers' attitudes remarkable. One member of a Massachusetts crew that put in two weeks of 16 hour days restoring power to the towns of Otis and Mariaville said, "When I left there, I was proud to be a lineman. My hat goes off to the people of Maine. They're really a special breed." The same lineman said he never heard an angry word, even though many residents had gone over a week without power and heat. In fact, people offered the linemen food and even hosted a public spaghetti dinner for the crews.

Indeed, throughout the state, people took strangers into their homes, brought food to elderly residents unable to get out, looked after the homes of those who were away, and cooked meals at local shelters. Maine's potato growers gave away truckloads of potatoes to those in need of food, radio stations fielded calls from residents sharing vital information and advice, and television stations banded together to raise over \$115,000 for Red Cross relief efforts.

My deepest gratitude goes to all those who made life a little easier for others during this most trying of times. In particular I want to recognize and extend my profound gratitude to the outstanding Red Cross officials and the over 1,800 volunteers who did an incredible job of organizing shelters and delivering vital emergency services, as well as the dedicated men and women of the National Guard who did not hesitate for a moment to provide assistance. Also the outstanding employees of the Maine Emergency Management Agency who deserve recognition for their timely and professional response to the disaster.

Again, you see what linemen crews did here in working on these downed power lines, as I said, and which was pervasive all over the State on miles and miles and miles of line.

I also want to extend my sincere appreciation to the men and women on utility crews from Maine and from throughout the country who toiled day and night to clear roads and rebuild a crippled power grid. These dedicated individuals worked incredible hours and in terrible weather conditions to bring the state back on line. They are truly unsung heroes and I thank them for their tireless work.

Indeed, to give you some idea of the magnitude of the effort, in one instance Air Force cargo planes made 13 trips between North Carolina and Maine to bring 50 fresh crews and 47 bucket trucks to lend a hand. It took 5,000 people to carry out the logistics at an estimated cost of this single operation of \$1 million.

In Augusta, local Public Works employees logged, on average, an 80 hour week, with some as high as 102 hours. The Maine Department of Transportation spent \$600,000 in overtime in one week and in that same time they used 54,000 cubic yards of sand and 5,000 tons of salt to the tune of another \$600,000.

And the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers worked with my office to coordinate their volunteer efforts to help reattach damaged entrance service cables on residences throughout the state so that the power company could re-energize the homes. (In one weekend, Local 567 helped put 75 houses back in shape so the power could come on and families who had done so long without heat could once again be warm.)

Those dedicated IBEW workers provided help where it was most needed, and I applaud these dedicated teams of electricians who donated their time, supplies, and skills to make vital repairs across the state. Indeed, it was an honor for me to spend time in the field with some of these unsung heroes to let them know how much I appreciate and admire their selfless efforts.

Finally, I want to thank all the volunteers who—in the face of their own difficulties—took the time to help others affected by this unprecedented storm. (We may never know their names or their faces, but we know what they have done and we are very, very grateful.)

It is a credit to Maine people that we coped as well as we did and made speedy progress in recovering and rebuilding. Everyone pulled together from Governor King to town officials to the Brotherhood of Electrical workers. But it was clear that we still needed help. We are an independent people and proud to solve our own problems, but this time even we couldn't do it alone. That is why the federal government's response to this disaster was and is so important.

The Vice President's personal tour of Maine in the wake of the disaster spoke to the magnitude of the challenge we were facing. I appreciate the Vice President's visit and the President's prompt declaration of 16 Maine counties as federal disaster areas.

This declaration opened the door to a variety of assistance, and it is estimated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency that about 300 Maine towns and non-profit organizations will seek public assistance from the agency. I am pleased that FEMA has established field offices in Maine to assist Mainers who are still trying to put their lives back together and I expect they will remain in the state for some time.

Because the fact is, the repercussions of this storm will be felt long after the ice melts and the first blossoms of spring make their way north. Dairy farm losses continue to mount and state agricultural officials may not know for months the full impact of the storm on the industry. Utilities are estimating that their costs will top \$70 to

80 million. The State of Maine estimates that they need the release of \$12 million in LIHEAP funds to help those who normally don't use the funds but will sign up this year, and to defray the costs of buying generators for those eligible.

Small businesses across the state have been reeling from lost business—as of last week the Small Business Administration has taken 450 applications for low-interest loans from individuals and businesses, and awarded loans of \$173,000. And overall, FEMA has considered 20,869 applications for individual and family grants, 10,085 applications for disaster housing, 9,849 applications for SBA home and property loans and 4,410 applications for SBA business loans.

This tremendous need for assistance must be met, and that is why I will continue my efforts in conjunction with my colleague from Maine, to ensure that Maine people have rapid and efficient access to the assistance that will become available over the days and weeks ahead.

Mr. President, we are working with the other States who were hit by the storm—Vermont, New Hampshire and New York—on a supplemental funding package to help our states recover from the devastation of the ice storm. The fact remains that we still must obtain an emergency release of LIHEAP funds, we still must acquire supplemental assistance to help prevent Maine's ratepayers from having to foot all of the utility bill, estimated to be \$80 million; and the U.S. Forest Service estimates that it will cost \$28 million to clean up the more than 7 million acres of working Maine forest which has suffered moderate to severe damage; for making our farmers and our small businesses whole again and for the additional costs our states have identified that they cannot cover.

My colleagues from the Northeast and I and my Maine congressional delegation have started working with the Appropriations Committee to assure that supplemental funding to meet the needs of our States can be included in the first supplemental funding bill which the committee will begin work on early next month.

As many of my colleagues know, we have faced the challenges posed by disasters in their own States. They recognize how important this additional assistance is to their States, and I hope that we can get this assistance as quickly as possible in order to ensure a quick and full recovery from the impact of this historic disaster.

I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

Ms. COLLINS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HUTCHINSON). The Senator from Maine. Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, will the distinguished Senator from Maine, Ms. COLLINS, yield just for a unanimous consent request?

Ms. COLLINS. I would be happy to yield.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. BYRD. I thank the distinguished Senator.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that on the completion of the remarks by Senator COLLINS, Senator CLELAND be recognized for 5 minutes, that I be recognized then for 20 minutes, and that my colleague, Senator ROCKEFELLER, be recognized for 10 minutes to speak out of order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I again thank the Senator.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today to join my colleague, the senior Senator from Maine, to describe just some of what the people of Maine have experienced in recent weeks, namely, the worst natural disaster in our State's history. The "Ice Storm of the Century," as we refer to it in Maine, began innocently enough with a light rain on Wednesday, January 7. By the time it let up 4 days later, however, the storm had encased the State in a layer of ice up to 10 inches thick and left well over \$100 million in damages in its wake.

When all we need to do to restore power is to flip a switch in our fuse boxes, it is very easy to take for granted just how essential power is to every aspect of our lives. Electricity allows us to cook our meals, heat our homes, and communicate with our neighbors and our friends. From the second we wake up in the morning, usually from the buzz of an electric alarm clock, power plays an integral role in our daily lives. Think for a moment of everything that you are able to do today so far because of power. Then just imagine how you would cope without power for 10 days or even longer as many Maine residents had to do. This ice storm was the single most devastating natural disaster to hit Maine in recorded history. Over 800,000—that is approximately 7 out of 10—of our residents lost power for at least some part of the storm, some for as long as 2 weeks or even longer.

As you can see from these pictures, Mr. President, power lines, telephone poles and trees were snapped in two by the massive onslaught of ice. This is a picture that appeared in the Bangor Daily News of power lines and of poles, telephone poles, and as you can see the tops of them have been sheared off by the massive weight of the ice.

Mr. President, I grew up in northern Maine. I am very used to mighty winter storms but never, never in my life, have I experienced a storm like this one. As I looked out from the window of my home in Bangor, limbs from my favorite maple tree in the front yard came crashing down on my roof and against the picture window in my living room. Transformers lit up the night with blue sparks as ice brought them tumbling down as well. And I was much more fortunate than many Maine residents. Many businesses were forced

to close due to the lack of power. People took to placing signs in the snow with arrows pointing to their homes reading "No Phone No Power." Even the National Weather Service located in Gray, ME, lost power for over a week and had to rely on a not-so-reliable generator to track the latest weather developments and to help keep Mainers safe and informed.

These pictures of a twig and a tiny blade of grass covered with 2 inches of ice were taken on the lawn adjacent to the National Weather Service office. As you can see, telephone poles were snapped in two, trees were coated by ice.

Mr. President, this is literally a blade of grass. We have a closeup that I am going to show you next on this.

This shows you just how amazing the ice was from this storm. A single blade of grass is photographed here encased with ice.

Adding insult to injury, on Saturday, January 25, just as Mainers had begun to return to life as usual, a second ice storm hit, knocking out power to 165,000 Mainers and crippling the electric grid in a region that had managed to come through the first storm relatively unscathed.

By all accounts, the worst of natural disasters brought out the best in Mainers. Volunteers flocked to shelters to lend a hand and to help serve meals. The State's television stations joined forces to raise money for the Red Cross, and our radio stations and newspapers provided practical tips and encouragement to help keep up the spirits of Mainers during our worst natural disaster. Heartwarming stories of people with little or nothing giving all that they could were commonplace during this tragedy. For 10 straight days, for example, one man opened his home to his neighbors every single night, housing the elderly and infants in his town and helping to remove the heavy branches from roads and from his neighbors' driveways.

On a personal note, when I ran out of wood after my fourth day without power, a neighbor quickly came to the rescue to help keep my pipes from freezing. Acts of kindness like this one exhibited by my neighbor were repeated over and over again in countless communities throughout the State. One in particular touched me deeply.

When I was visiting the Red Cross shelter in Bangor at the Air National Guard base, I talked with an elderly woman in a wheelchair who had been forced to leave her home because of the storm. She was obviously a victim of a stroke and was unable to move much of her right side. In addition, it was obvious that she was a person of very modest means. Nevertheless, she said to me, "Could you help me by reaching into my pocketbook. I have \$2 there that I would like to donate to the Red Cross."

Mr. President, that is the kind of spirit, of generosity and kindness that characterizes Maine people. Even in

her dire situation, this woman was able to think of people less fortunate than herself. That spirit of kindness and generosity helped us to survive the "Ice Storm of the Century."

Unfortunately, while kindness and good will and generosity and a sense of community helped us to get through the worst of the storm, they alone cannot complete the recovery.

Mainers experienced serious financial and property losses as a result of the storm. Early estimates put the damages to homes, businesses, utilities and public property at well over \$100 million, and it is still growing. The estimated cost of repairs to Maine's power grid alone is a staggering \$70 million, and that is money the ratepayers of Maine will have to bear unless there is assistance forthcoming from the Federal Government.

However, simply attaching a dollar amount to the damage fails to provide a true picture of the devastation experienced by virtually the entire State of Maine. To give you a more vivid idea of the destruction of the ice storm of 1998, I want to share some statistics with my colleagues.

During this ice storm, 7 out of 10 Mainers lost power, some for as long as 14 days; schools across the southern and central portion of the State closed for many days, some for over 2 weeks; all of Maine's 16 counties were declared Federal disaster areas; at just one hospital in central Maine, more than 80 people were treated for carbon monoxide poisoning, 4 people, unfortunately, died of carbon monoxide poisoning; thousands of families were forced into more than 100 emergency shelters across the State, hundreds of thousands of others spent the night with their families, with family members, neighbors or friends; more than 11 million acres of Maine's forest lands—that is more than half of the State's total—were damaged by the storm. Of this total more than 3 million acres are classified as severely damaged; 1,200 utility crews from as far away as Nova Scotia to North Carolina were sent to Maine to help restore power lines. We are very grateful for that assistance; our telephone company, Bell Atlantic, dispatched 625 fieldworkers, several of whom were on loan from other States; in a remarkable development, the Department of Defense actually airlifted bucket trucks and power crews to help us with the repairs; manufacturers of electric parts from as far away as Alabama worked overtime for 10 days to help meet our power company's needs; 3 million feet of electrical cable were irreparably damaged and nearly 3,000 utility poles had to be replaced. Think of how sturdy a utility pole is. We lost 3,000 of them during this storm.

Even after the debris has been removed and our electric infrastructure has been repaired, much of Maine's natural resources based economy will take years to recover. Dairy farmers, maple syrup producers, apple growers, and our forestry industry were particu-

larly hard hit. In addition, because of the countless downed trees and limbs, some of the 11 million acres of damaged forest lands will remain vulnerable to fire and to insect attacks for years to come. Neighbors, Government agencies and nonprofit organizations rallied to the support of the hundreds of thousands of Mainers displaced by the ice storm, but it will take a strong commitment from the Federal Government for Mainers to truly complete the process of putting their homes, their bases and their communities back together.

Vice President GORE's tour of the hardest-hit areas and the prompt assistance of FEMA, HUD and SBA demonstrate the Federal Government's concern for Mainers and their commitment to recovery efforts. But additional help is needed. So as we enjoy the comfortable spring-like temperatures in Washington, DC, I urge my colleagues not to forget the Mainers buried in ice and snow. I hope that my colleagues will remember these statistics and the photographs that the senior Senator from Maine and I have shown you today in the coming weeks as we join with other members of the Maine delegation in asking for my colleagues' assistance through a supplemental appropriation for disaster relief.

I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senator from Georgia is recognized.

Mr. CLELAND. I thank the Chair.

INTERMODAL SURFACE TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY ACT REAUTHORIZATION

Mr. CLELAND. Mr. President, I would like to speak today in support of the reauthorization of the Intermodal Surface Transportation and Efficiency Act, better known as ISTEA. More importantly, I am here today to add my voice to that of the distinguished senior Senator from West Virginia, who has made an eloquent and persuasive case for bringing this legislation to the floor for consideration at the earliest possible opportunity.

That I believe was the commitment the Senate made to the American people prior to our early adjournment last year. In the last several days, I paid close attention to that said by my colleagues, many of whom in the Senate have commented on this matter. I would like to make just a few observations.

One of the most striking aspects of the debate which is apparently delaying the Senate's consideration of ISTEA is that it is taking place at all. It is not all that uncommon, I suppose, based on my limited time here, that we argue how to utilize supposedly dedicated trust fund moneys. I am here today to say that these trust fund dollars, whether for Social Security or transportation, are not ours to allocate as we see fit. They are collected from

the American people based on specific usage, and we have been entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring that in the case of transportation the taxpayers' gas tax dollars are used for our great country's critical infrastructure needs.

Unlike the Senator from West Virginia, I am not an expert on the Roman Republic and the Roman Empire, but I am a student of history, and I believe that ancient Rome was one of the world's earliest and most successful civilizations. Some scholars would say it was good government that allowed the empire to survive as long as it did.

Others believe that it was the strength of the Roman army. In my opinion, one of the most enduring legacies of the Empire, carried on in our American civilization today, is the practice of building roads to facilitate commerce and defense. America's transportation system is the envy of the world and so is the commerce it facilitates. I'll add that the Roman Empire was once the envy of the world too. Where is it now? With apologies to Gibbon, maybe their government failed to pass its transportation funding in a timely fashion.

By delaying the reauthorization of this multibillion-dollar ISTEA funding we put at jeopardy not only commerce and defense but the very lives and livelihoods of those who send us here. Recently I was contacted by a Georgia hospital on a different matter, but it did concern a road project in Georgia. They made the case for the need for a particular transportation corridor and stressed the difficulty their emergency service vehicles were having in this area. When we put off, day after day, action on this legislation, we impede, and sometimes, stop action on projects which may be critical to an area's economy, or vital for highway safety.

Many Senators, Democrat and Republican, North and South, East and West, have all made the case that we need to take up ISTEA legislation, and I respectfully join those colleagues in urging prompt action. We must take up this legislation now. That was the promise that was made to the American people.

When we make commitments, Mr. President, we must stick to them. We simply cannot be a body of continuing resolutions. That is not good government and it does not serve the people well. I know the leadership has heard about this a great deal the last 2 weeks, but I must respectfully request that we take up this legislation now; let's bring this matter to the floor now.

Mr. President, ISTEA legislation is important to our largest cities and our smallest communities alike. It's about jobs, safety, commerce, defense, and it's about the future. It's too important to put off until an uncertain future date. We have a responsibility to act now. Let us do the work required of us.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and I yield any remaining time to the distinguished Senator from West Virginia.